



TheLexLine

A newsletter from The **Lexington** Group, Inc.
Employee Assistance Program

SUMMER 2017

For Your Information



COUPLE CARE

Communication is the key to a strong, healthy relationship. Without effective communication, any relationship is in trouble. Communicate your thoughts, plans, ideas and opinions with your partner on a consistent basis. Equally important: Communicate your feelings – the joys, sorrows or frustrations we all experience.

ANGER MANAGEMENT TIP

Walk away when you're angry. Before you react, take time to mentally regroup by counting to 10. Then look at the situation again. Walking or other physical activities will also help you work off steam.

OVERWHELMING STRESS

If you're feeling overwhelmed by stress, how do you know when it's time to get professional help? According to the American Psychological Association, here are a few indicators:

- You feel trapped, like there's nowhere to turn
- You worry excessively and can't concentrate
- The way you feel affects your sleep, your eating habits, your job, your relationships, your everyday life

If you or a family member needs help, contact your EAP for confidential counseling, referrals or information.

WELLNESS

Happiness Improves Health And Lengthens Life

According to a study in the journal *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, a review of more than 160 studies has found "clear and compelling evidence" that – all things being equal – happy people tend to live longer and experience better health than their unhappy peers.

"Your subjective well-being – that is, feeling positive about your life, not stressed out, not depressed – contributes to both longevity and better health among healthy populations," said lead study author, Ed Diener, Ph.D.

Tips to increase happiness

The good news? Happiness researchers say that you have the ability and power to be happier by changing your thoughts, actions and habits. Below are strategies and "happiness activities" shown in numerous studies to increase the happiness of study participants. To improve your happiness, choose the strategies or activities that suit you best. Build these activities into your everyday life to ensure long-term success. Seek out additional resources, if needed, to expand your knowledge, skills and success in the areas you choose.

Live with purpose. People who strive for something personally significant – whether it's learning a new skill, raising a good family, or changing careers – are happier than those who don't have strong dreams or aspirations. Pick one or more significant goals and devote time and effort pursuing them. The process of working towards your goal is as important to your well being as its attainment.

Cultivate optimism. "Many people say things happen for the best. I don't agree with that," says Tal Ben-Shahar, Ph.D., a Harvard University psychology professor and author of *Happier*. "But some people are able to make the best of things that happen – and that's a key to happiness." One way to do this is to reframe your thoughts. If you see everything that goes wrong as being permanent (things are going to be this bad forever); pervasive (this is going to wreck everything); and personal (it's all my fault); you're more likely to feel sad, fearful or anxious. Instead try to view your problems as temporary (this will pass); limited (this problem affects only one, specific part of my life); and learn to look at the situation objectively to determine your part of the problem and what you can do. You can train yourself to look on the bright side. Using a practice called "cognitive restructuring," you can help yourself become more optimistic by consciously challenging negative, self-



Tips to increase happiness...

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limiting thinking and replacing it with more optimistic thought patterns. Numerous studies report that positive, optimistic people are happier and live longer.

Nurture your relationships. The happiest people surround themselves with family and friends. A Japanese study published last year found that contented people's happy experiences most often involved connecting with someone.

Happy people have a strong bond with at least two out of three of these essential relationships: a partner, a friend, or a parent. Experts say the best way to improve a relationship is to invest time and energy in it.

Count your blessings. One way to feel happier is to recognize good things when they happen. Express gratitude for what you have privately and also by conveying appreciation to others. If you have trouble counting your blessings, try keeping a gratitude journal. Write down three to five things you're grateful for once a week. Several studies show that people who record what they appreciate experience greater happiness and less anxiety.

Practice spirituality. Studies show that people who have a spiritual dimension in their life – defined not as an affiliation with an organized religion, but as an internal sense of the spiritual meaning of life – are happier than those who don't. It doesn't matter what you call it – God, Spirit, Higher Power or Nature – connecting to your spirituality is the experience of feeling connected to a force bigger than yourself. The more deeply you experience this connection, the more content and happy your life will feel. To nurture your spiritual side: learn meditation, pray, read spiritual books, or get more involved in your church, temple or mosque.

Develop healthy coping strategies.

It's hard to be happy if you're chronically over-stressed and emotionally drained. Stress and anxiety are huge barriers to health and happiness. Research from Harvard Medical School has found that women 100 years and older share a common trait – they're not plagued by negative feelings such as guilt, anger, fear and sadness. Find and practice healthy ways to manage stress, hardship or trauma.

MONEY AND DEBT

Warning Signs of Financial Trouble

Financial experts warn that many people in financial trouble ignore, or fail to recognize, the signs of financial problems and continue to go further and further into debt and financial difficulty. Recognizing the signs of financial trouble is vital, say the experts, because financial problems, once started, tend to get worse if they are left unresolved.



Signs that you need financial assistance

Do you know the warning signs of financial trouble? See the list below:

- You are borrowing to meet regular expenses, such as food and utility bills.
- You are barely able to make the minimum required payment on bills, but continue to charge.
- You are using one form of credit, such as a credit card or a debt consolidation loan, to make payments on other debts.
- You are using 20% or more of your take-home income to pay credit card bills and personal loans (excluding mortgage payments).
- Your revolving credit cards are charged to the limit.
- You are behind on credit payments and receiving calls from creditors or collection agencies.
- You are bouncing checks.
- You have no cash reserve.

What to do

If any of the warning signs above describe your financial situation, it is important that you face up to your financial troubles. Recognizing the signs is the first step toward turning your financial situation around. If you are not sure what to do, contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for confidential counseling, referrals or information. A professional EAP counselor can help you assess your situation and determine a plan of action to strengthen your financial position. If you need help, why not call a professional EAP counselor today?

The Lexington Group

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Caring and individualized help for personal and family concerns is only a phone call away.

For confidential help 24 hours a day, call The Lexington Group, an international Employee Assistance Program provider at:

United States	1-800-676-HELP (4357)	Marshall Islands	1-800-676-4357
Canada	1-800-567-4343	Mexico	001-888-819-7162
England	0-800-169-6706	Puerto Rico	1-800-676-4357
Cayman Islands	1-855-328-1185	TTY	1-800-955-8339
Ireland	1-800-812-411		